



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 03-27-2001**

**ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2001**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**7:30 PM**

**Present:**     **Wm. A. Carey, Jr., Chair**                     **Martin J. Thrope**  
                 **Joani LaMachia, Vice-Chair**                     **Denis J. Sullivan**  
                 **Michael T. Healy, Secretary**                     **Barbara C. Goodman**  
                 **David W. McKenna**

**Supt. Kay Donovan, Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry, Director of Special Education Marilyn Bisbicos**

**Call to Order: 7:40 PM**

### **Public Participation**

Board of Selectmen Kevin Greeley, thanked Committee member Mike Healy for his service as a member of the Arlington School Committee for the past 15 years. Mr. Greeley addressed the Committee relative to rumors that support for the new Peirce School would wane if the ballot vote on the Symmes land does not pass. Mr. Greeley emphasized that the voters supported seven schools and he would stand by that commitment and the commitment that Peirce will be rebuilt. Mr. Greeley, along with Bob Bowes of Bowes Realty and Brian Greeley spoke to the committee relative to the unique opportunity the town has in acquiring the property.

Carol Kowalski, Brackett School parent addressed the issue of the unofficial but regular practice of eliminating recess in the elementary schools. She would like the schools to try to set a goal and time frame to come up with an outdoor recess policy that can be implemented district-wide.

Eric Segal, Hardy School parent polled surrounding communities on their recess times and found that Cambridge, Acton and Somerville offered more time than Arlington. Mr. Segal stated that he would offer any assistance regarding the issue.

Mary Lewis Sheehan, announced that APS and the Sanborn Foundation is sponsoring **Arms Around Arlington on April 7th** a day long event that supports families touched by cancer.

### **Elementary School Recess**

Supt. Donovan acknowledged that there is not a lot of time for recess citing the mandated 900 hours of required time on learning for grades 1-5. Mrs. Donovan did state that kindergarten students have more leeway since they are required to have only 425 hours of time on learning.

The Superintendent does recognize the fact that physical education is not free play but Arlington does offer more time than other communities. Mrs. Donovan shared a typical day for a kindergarten student and emphasized that students move around quite a bit during the course of the day. Supt. Donovan suggested that each school meet with the school council, parents, and the principal to discuss recess and to take a look at what options are available.

Mr. Thrope stated that the reason he requested that this issue be placed on the agenda is to find out if we do have consistent practice across the system and is our intent being carried out.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and second by Mr. Sullivan

Voted that the School Committee, believing that consistent outdoor exercise is important, will ask the principals to work with the school councils to develop a plan to ensure outdoor recess, and to report back to the Committee by May 8, 2001. Unanimous

Ms. LaMachia stated that obstacles faced by teachers must be taken into account and how to be helpful and supportive of them. Mr. McKenna believed that it would be difficult and emphasized that we must look at the total picture; i.e. rain, mud, cold, if children are properly dressed and that not everyone will be happy with the decision that is made.

### **Public Hearing 2001/2002 School Budget**

Superintendent Donovan presented a power point presentation of the 2001-2002-school budget. The School Committee voted on a figure of \$31,470,185.00, a 7.46 percent increase over last year. Mrs. Donovan cited the need for additional teachers at the elementary, middle, and

high school due to an increase in enrollments and special education costs as the major reasons for the increase. Arlington Public Schools has been able to bring in \$2,327,498.00 in grant money to the schools.

Roland Chaput asked if the \$35,000.00 figure is realistic for recruiting new teachers. And Jane Howard inquired if the Metco increase would be used to provide buses for after school activities for those students.

#### **Election of Chief Financial Officer**

Supt. Donovan presented David Kale as her candidate for the position of Chief Financial Officer of Arlington Public Schools and asked the Committee's support. Currently Mr. Kale is employed by Cambridge Public Schools as Manager of Financial Services and comes with high recommendations from the Superintendent of Schools in Cambridge.

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was  
Voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to appoint David Kale as  
Chief Financial Officer for Arlington Public Schools. Unanimous

Mr. Kale thanked the Committee for their support and stated that he is looking forward to working in a well-respected school system and community as Arlington.

#### **Farewell To Mike Healy**

A farewell was held for Mike Healy who completed fifteen years of service on the Arlington School Committee. Mr. Healy was presented with a captain's chair engraved with the Town's logo along with his name and years of service. The Superintendent along with committee members thanked Mr. Healy for his hard work and dedication.

#### **Recess**

#### **Report of Budget Task Force**

Supt. Donovan reported that the task force hopes to bridge the gap in the budget and does not anticipate any lay offs within the Town of Arlington.

#### **Report of Finance Committee**

Mrs. Donovan appeared before the finance committee on March 21st. The Superintendent defended the 2001-2002 school budget and answered questions relative to the increases in the budget. The finance committee did not vote on the budget.

#### **Report of Subcommittees**

##### **Policy & Procedures**

Mr. Healy reported that the subcommittee met this evening and finished section I of the policy manual. Currently 9 out of the 12 sections of the manual are complete. Continuing, Mr. Healy stated that he would like the committee to finish the manual by the end of the school year. Mr. Healy thanked the members of the subcommittee for their support in updating the manual.

The subcommittee agreed that in the future any overseas trips would need approval of the school committee.

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was  
Voted to approve the overseas trip to Italy by the Performing Arts Department. Unanimous.

Mr. Carey took the opportunity to thank the Committee for their support during his tenure as chair.

#### **Secretary's Report**

Mr. Healy reviewed correspondence.

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was  
Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 13, 2001  
6 yes 1 abstention (Mr. Sullivan abstain)

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was  
Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 27, 2001. Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. Thorpe  
Voted to approve the executive session minutes of February 13, 2001  
6 yes 1 abstention (Mr. Sullivan abstain)

#### **Report of PTBC**

Mr. Thrope reported that the Hardy School is continuing towards completion. The Peirce is moving towards commencement, and the Thompson & Stratton Schools are in the design process.

#### **Vote on Warrant Article**

Mrs. Donovan referred the Committee to a letter from John Maher relative to article #55 – Deed Restriction/Peirce Field. The Superintendent stated that the article is asking for approval for the involved parties to proceed to the DEP for approval of the remediation plan.

Supt. Donovan reviewed the list of communities where the school committees receive compensation. Mrs. Donovan was unable to obtain all the legal information on school committee's classification since Town Counsel John Maher is on vacation.

On a motion by Mr. McKenna and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was

Voted to table the warrant article on school committee compensation (#84) until all pertinent information is received. 6 yes-1-no, Mr. Healy voted no

**New Business**

None

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Healy

Voted to enter executive session to discuss negotiations and a personnel issue, with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session RC: Unanimous.

On a motion made and seconded it was voted to adjourn at 11:15PM